

Application No. 09/881,785
Response to Office Action Mailed November 28, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1–20 were pending and were rejected. Claims 1–20 are cancelled. New claims 21–41 are presented. Reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the following remarks.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1–20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Sun (U.S. Patent 6,501,740). Each of the new claims 21–41, contains at least one limitation not taught or suggested by Sun, and thus the rejection is improper as to the newly presented claims.

For example, claim 21 is drawn to a conference endpoint comprising, among other things: (1) “a telephone line interface for coupling said conference endpoint to a telephone line” and (2) “a network interface for coupling said conference endpoint to a computer network.” Sun fails to teach such a conference endpoint.

Sun is drawn to a system and method for interconnecting connection oriented networks, e.g., telephone networks, with connectionless networks, e.g., the Internet. As can be clearly seen from Fig. 3 of Sun, there are a plurality of conference endpoints 315, 318, and 319 that have network connections to Internet 317 and a plurality of conference endpoints 311 and 312 that have telephone connections to PSTN 314. However, there is no endpoint that includes both a telephone interface and a network interface. While call server 316 does include a network interface to Internet 317 and a telephone interface to PSTN 314, it cannot be the endpoint of claim 1 because it does not include the required microphone, speaker, and/or data conference initiation module also recited in claim 1.

Because Sun fails to teach or suggest a conference endpoint comprising: (1) a telephone line interface, (2) a network interface, (3) a microphone, (4) a speaker, and (5) a data conference initiation module as required by claim 21, claim 21 is allowable over Sun.

Similarly, claim 28 also includes limitations neither taught nor suggested by Sun. Claim 28 recites a method performed at a near conference endpoint. Claim 28 requires, among other things, establishing a connection over a telephone line with at least one remote endpoint and transmitting a data conference initiation request to a conference server over a computer network. This requires that the endpoint have a connection to both the telephone network and a computer network. However, as noted above, Sun does not teach or suggest this arrangement, and thus

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cannot teach the method of establishing a telephone connection with an endpoint and transmitting data to a conference server over a data network.

Moreover, Sun also fails to teach or suggest the limitations on the method requiring receiving a conference code from the server (over the computer network), generating an audio signal representative of the conference code, and transmitting the audio signal to the remote conference endpoint (over the telephone network). Again, the practice of these method limitations would require an endpoint with both a telephone interface and a computer network interface, something which is neither taught nor suggested by Sun. Because Sun fails to teach or suggest this arrangement, claim 28 is allowable over Sun.

Similarly, claim 31 is not anticipated by Sun. Claim 31 recites a method performed at a conference server. Claim 31 requires: (1) receiving a conference initiation request from an endpoint, (2) generating a conference code in response to the conference initiation request, (3) transmitting the conference code to the endpoint, (4) maintaining a list of data conference participants based on received data conference join requests, and (5) transmitting conference data to the data conference participants over the computer network. Sun simply contains no teaching or suggestion of the required method steps. Claim 31 is thus allowable over Sun.

Claim 35 is drawn to a machine readable medium having instructions to cause the machine to execute a method of: (1) transmitting a conference initiation request to a conference server over a computer network, (2) receiving a conference code from said conference server over the computer network, (3) generating an audio signal representative of the conference code, and (4) transmitting the audio signal to a conference endpoint over a telephone line. As with claims 21 and 28, claim 35 requires that the machine executing the instructions must have an interface to both a telephone network and a computer network to be capable of performing steps (1) and (4), i.e., transmitting a conference initiation request over a computer network and transmitting the audio signal over a telephone line. As noted above, Sun simply does not teach or suggest such an arrangement. Claim 35 is thus allowable over Sun.

Claim 36 is also drawn to a machine readable medium. The machine readable medium of claim 36 must cause the machine to (1) receive an audio signal representative of a conference code from a remote endpoint over a telephone line and (2) transmit a conference join request to a conference server over a computer network. As with claims 21, 28, and 35, claim 36 also necessarily requires that the machine executing the instructions have an interface to a telephone

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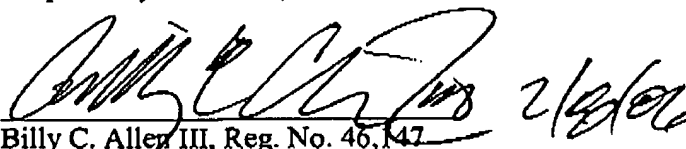
network and a computer network to perform the method. Limitation (1) clearly requires that the executing machine include a telephone network connection to receive the audio signal, and limitation (2) clearly requires that the executing machine include a computer network connection to transmit the conference join request. Because Sun contains no such teaching or suggestion, claim 36 is allowable over Sun.

Finally, claim 37, as with claims 21, 28, and 35-36, requires a conference endpoint with a telephone interface and a network interface. As discussed, Sun contains no such teaching or suggestion, and the claims are thus allowable for at least the reasons discussed herein. Claim 37 also has other limitations not taught nor suggested by the art of record, although it is not necessary to address these at this time.

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Applicant submits that all of the pending claims are allowable, and requests that a Notice of Allowance be issued for these claims.

Respectfully submitted,


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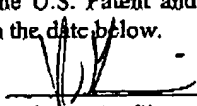
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February 8, 2006

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